

*Progress Report on Students Attaining the
Competency Determination
Statewide and by School and District:
Classes of 2007 and 2008*

June 2007
Massachusetts Department of Education



Massachusetts Department of Education

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Dr. David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

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Executive Summary of the Competency Determination Rates for the Classes of 2007 and 2008

This report provides an update on the progress of students in the classes of 2007 and 2008 toward meeting the Competency Determination (CD) standard.

Statewide data in this report are summarized by race/ethnicity, student status (students with disabilities, limited English proficient students, and low income students), gender, vocational-technical school enrollment, and type of community (i.e., urban, non-urban) where students live. Additionally, aggregate data are provided in separate Excel files, located at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.html, for every public school and school district in the Commonwealth.

A. State Level Competency Determination Results

The March 2007 MCAS retest administration represented the fourth retest opportunity for students in the class of 2007 and the second retest opportunity for students in the class of 2008. As Figure 1 below shows, 95% of the class of 2007 and 92% of the class of 2008 have met the CD standard.

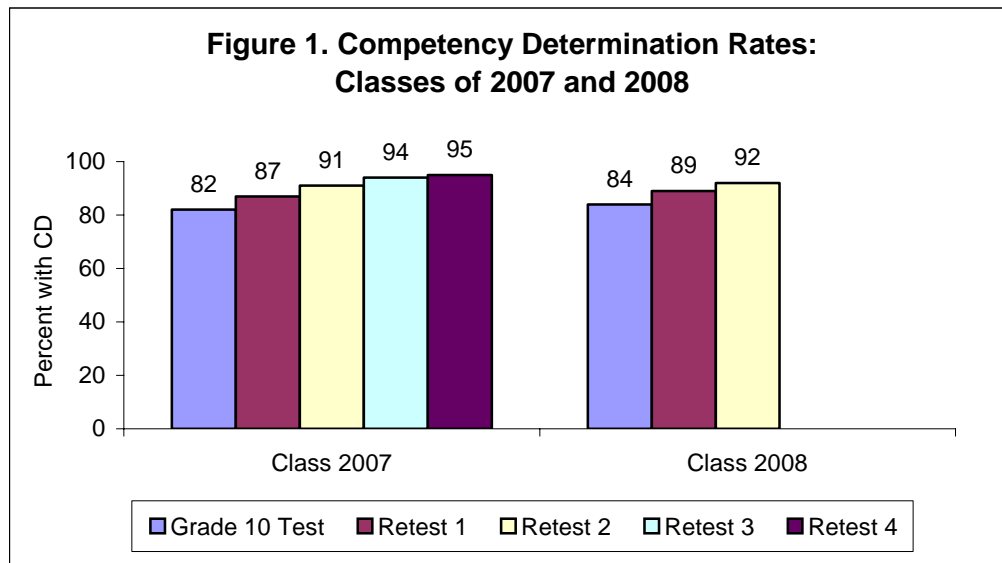
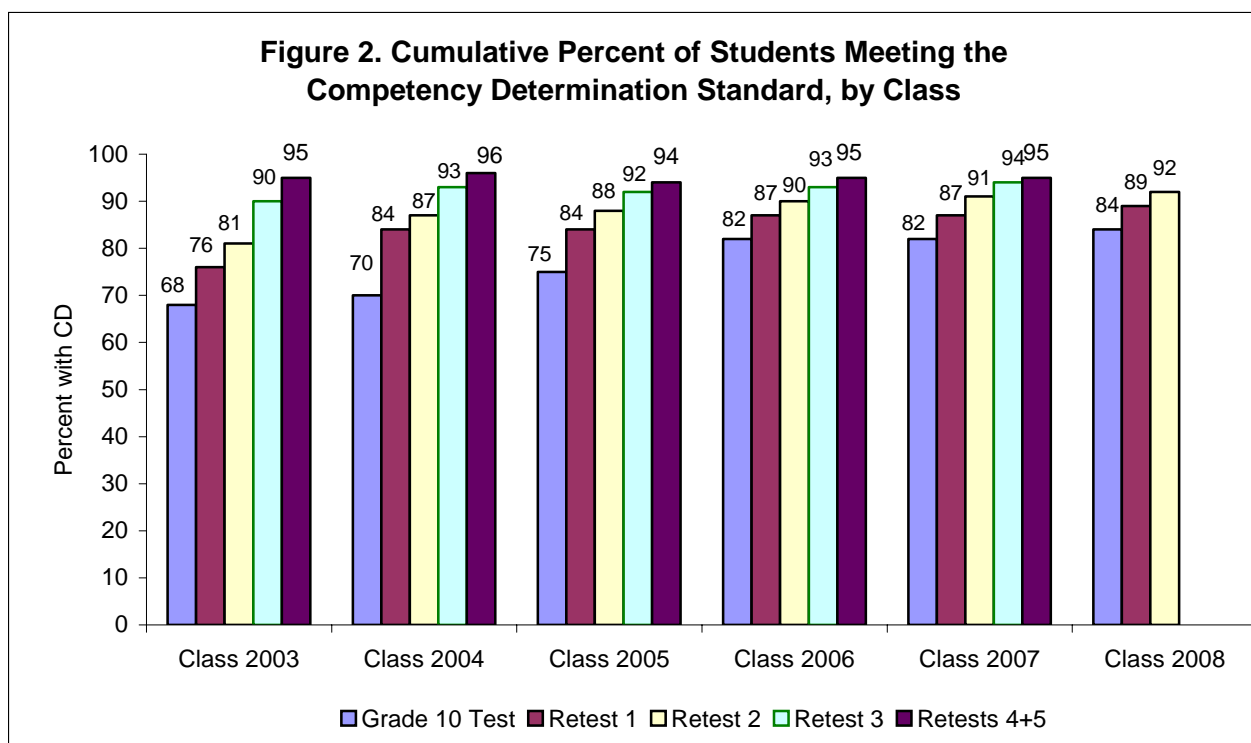


Figure 2 shows the percent of students in the classes of 2003-2008 who met the CD standard by passing MCAS tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in grade 10 and the cumulative percent of students in each class who met the standard after each retest opportunity available to them. Figure 2 illustrates the following trends:

- The percent of students meeting the standard on the first attempt has increased for each successive graduating class, with the exception of the percent for the class of 2007, which remained unchanged from 2006. The percent increased from 68% for the class of 2003; to 70% for the class of 2004; to 75% for the class of 2005; to 82% for the classes of 2006 and 2007; to 84% for the class of 2008.

- For each graduating class, the cumulative percent of students meeting the standard has increased from one retest opportunity to the next. For example, the percent of students meeting the standard for the class of 2006 increased from 87% (retest 1) to 90% (retest 2) to 93% (retest 3) to 95% (retests 4 and 5).
- For retests 1 and 2, the cumulative percent of students meeting the standard after each retest opportunity equaled or exceeded that of each preceding graduating class. For example, after the first retest opportunity: 76% of the students in the class of 2003 met the standard; 84% of the students in the classes of 2004 and 2005 met the standard; 87% of the classes of 2006 and 2007 met the standard; and 89% of students in the class of 2008 met the standard.



Note: Students in out-of-district placements are included in retest results for the classes of 2005-2008, but not for 2003 and 2004.

Table 1 shows the denominators used in calculating the cumulative percent of students meeting the CD standard reported in Figure 2.

Table 1
Student Enrollment and Percent of Students Attaining the Competency Determination:
Classes of 2003-2008

		Grade 10 Test	Retest 1	Retest 2	Retest 3	Retest 4+5
Class of 2003	% Earning CD	68	76	81	90	95
	Enrollment	68,118 (MCAS 2001)	63,767 (Oct. 2001)	63,767 (Oct. 2001)	60,742 (Oct. 2002)	59,823 (Adj. Oct. 2002)
Class of 2004	% Earning CD	70	84	87	93	96
	Enrollment	67,343 (MCAS 2002)	66,472 (Oct. 2002)	66,472 (Oct. 2002)	62,266 (Oct. 2003)	61,424 (Adj. Oct. 2003)
Class of 2005	% Earning CD	75	84	88	92	94
	Enrollment	69,981 (MCAS 2003)	69,263 (Oct. 2003)	69,263 (Oct. 2003)	65,285 (Oct. 2004)	65,165 (Adj. Oct. 2004)
Class of 2006	% Earning CD	82	87	90	93	95
	Enrollment	71,038 (MCAS 2004)	70,610 (Oct. 2004)	69,425 (Adj. Oct. 2004)	66,975 (Oct. 2005)	66,757 (Adj. Oct. 2005)
Class of 2007	% Earning CD	82	87	91	94	95
	Enrollment	72,680 (MCAS 2005)	72,623 (Oct. 2005)	70,771 (Adj. Oct. 2005)	69,118 (Oct. 2006)	69,195 (Adj. Oct. 2006)
Class of 2008	% Earning CD	83	89	92		
	Enrollment	75,771 (MCAS 2006)	73,964 (Oct. 2006)	72,684 (Adj. Oct. 2006)		

Student enrollment figures for the grade 10 tests are based on the number of students enrolled at the time of testing. Enrollment figures for retests are based on the enrollment information submitted to the Department through the Student Information Management System (SIMS) on October 1 of each year. An adjusted October enrollment is derived from the October 1 SIMS enrollment for the school year minus/plus students who changed grade, minus students who transferred out of the state or to private schools during the year, or who passed away.

I. Overview of the Competency Determination

A. Background

The Massachusetts Education Reform Law of 1993 requires students to attain the CD as a condition for high school graduation. In January 2000, the Board of Education voted to adopt the following regulation for the CD:

Students in the graduating class of 2003 shall meet or exceed the Needs Improvement threshold score of 220 on both the English Language Arts and Mathematics MCAS grade 10 tests in order to satisfy the requirements of the Competency Determination.

The Education Reform Law also states: “If a student’s assessment results for the tenth grade do not demonstrate the required level of competency, the student shall have the right to participate in the assessment program the following year or years.” Accordingly, the Board of Education voted in January 2001 that students who do not earn a scaled score of at least 220 on either or both of the required grade 10 tests be provided additional opportunities to retake the test(s) before their scheduled graduation dates.

The vast majority of students meet the CD standard by passing the grade 10 MCAS tests or retests with a scaled score of at least 220 in both ELA and Mathematics. Additionally, two other means for attaining the CD are available to eligible students whose knowledge and skills are not measured well by standardized tests: the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) and the MCAS Performance Appeals Process. For each class from 2003-2007, approximately 99% of students earned the CD through standard grade 10 MCAS tests or retests; around 1% earned the CD through MCAS appeals; fewer than 10 students earned the CD through the MCAS-Alt.

The MCAS-Alt enables students with disabilities to demonstrate academic achievement through a portfolio assessment. The MCAS Performance Appeals Process was established to allow students who fail to earn a passing score on the grade 10 MCAS tests or retests to demonstrate that they have knowledge and skills equivalent to the knowledge and skills of their classmates who have met the passing standard for graduation. Additional information about the MCAS-Alt is available on the Department Web site at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt, while information on the MCAS Performance Appeals Process is available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals.

B. Standard Grade 10 Tests vs. Focused Retests

The standard grade 10 MCAS tests are designed for multiple purposes. In addition to providing data to determine whether a student has met the CD standard, results of these tests are used by local educators to improve curriculum and instruction, and by the Department to determine whether schools and districts have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as required by the No Child Left Behind law. Results are also used to determine students’ eligibility for state scholarships and awards. Standard grade 10 MCAS tests measure and report results at four performance levels: *Advanced*, *Proficient*, *Needs Improvement*, and *Failing*.

In contrast, focused retests are designed for the single purpose of determining whether students have met the CD standard. Currently, a scaled score of 220 (the threshold of the *Needs Improvement* level) is required for passing. Accordingly, results of the focused retests are reported at only two performance levels: *Passing* and *Failing*.

C. Student Participation in Retests

Participation in retests is not mandatory. Students may take either the ELA retest, the Mathematics retest, or the retests in both subjects.

MCAS retest participants are primarily students in grade 11 or 12 who have previously taken the grade 10 tests but have not yet attained the CD. Students who move to Massachusetts from another state or country, who transfer from a private school during grade 11 or 12, or who are unable to participate in the spring grade 10 tests due to illness are also eligible for the retests.

Tables 2 and 3 below show the numbers of students in the classes of 2007 and 2008 who participated in each testing opportunity and the percent that passed (earned a scaled score of at least 220) for each content area test.

Table 2
Class of 2007: Number of Students Participating and Percent Passing Each Test and Retest

Subject Area	Grade 10 May 2005		Retest 1 Nov. 2005		Retest 2 Mar. 2006		Retest 3 Nov. 2006		Retest 4 Mar. 2007	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
English Language Arts	72,718	89	6,100	59	1,998	56	2,475	40	856	42
Mathematics	72,817	85	8,948	40	3,376	44	5,034	41	1,742	46

Table 3
Class of 2008: Number of Students Participating and Percent Passing Each Test and Retest

Subject Area	Grade 10 May 2006		Retest 1 Nov. 2006		Retest 2 Mar. 2007	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
English Language Arts	75,698	91	4,833	58	2,125	43
Mathematics	75,348	85	8,193	43	4,506	43

D. Competency Determination Rate vs. Graduation Rate

Prior to the 2007 school year, CD rates were used in the calculations that determined which high schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Massachusetts. In 2007, the Department changed its policy and will replace the CD rate with a four-year graduation rate for AYP determinations, along with participation, performance, and improvement requirements.

CD rates differ from those four-year graduation rates because they represent fundamentally different measurements. CD rates portray the number and percentage of students in a given class who have passed MCAS and who were still enrolled as of the beginning of their junior or senior year. Graduation rates measure the number and percentage of students who were ever in the class who met both state and local requirements.

The CD rates for the classes of 2007 and 2008 in this report were based on the cohort of students who were enrolled on October 1, 2006, and have been adjusted for students who transferred, changed grade, or passed away during the year.

The class of 2006 was the first for which the state was able to track all students using four years of complete enrollment information from SIMS. When the Department released its first-ever statewide graduation rate in January 2007, the class of 2006 graduation rate was based on the number of students who had enrolled as first-time ninth graders in 2002 and who graduated from high school with the same student cohort four years later, as follows:

$$\frac{\text{\# of students in cohort (denominator) who graduated in 4 years or less}}{\text{\# of 1st time entering 9th graders in 2002–03} - (\text{transfers out/deaths}) + (\text{transfers in})}$$

(# of 1st time entering 9th graders in 2002–03) – (transfers out/deaths) + (transfers in)

For the class of 2006, approximately 80% of the nearly 75,000 students who started as freshman during the 2002–2003 school year graduated within four years. By contrast, the CD rate for the seniors who were still enrolled as 12th graders during the 2006 school year was 95%.

E. New Race/Ethnicity Codes

In response to federal changes in data collection methods, the Department of Education made changes to its collection of race and ethnicity data in October 2005.

Previously each student could only be identified as one of the following: African American/Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native American, or White. Under the new system, each student may be identified by one or more race and by an ethnicity. The racial groups are: African American/Black, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Native American, and White. In addition, each student's ethnicity is identified as either Hispanic/Latino or non-Hispanic/Latino.

This new categorization results in 63 possible combinations of the five racial groups and two ethnicities. To facilitate analysis, reports collapse the 63 categories into seven. Consequently, all students identified as Hispanic are placed in the Hispanic category, regardless of their racial identification. All students identified by a single race and as non-Hispanic/Latino are placed in their respective racial category. The remaining students are placed in the multi-race – non-Hispanic category.

II. CD Results Disaggregated by Subgroup: Classes of 2007 and 2008

This section provides statewide student subgroup CD attainment rates for the classes of 2007 and 2008 on all MCAS tests and retests through March 2007. The following is a list of definitions for each of the student groups for which results are disaggregated.

Students with Disabilities: A student with a disability has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) provided under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*.

Non-Disabled: A student who is non-disabled does not have an IEP provided under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*.

Limited English Proficient: A limited English proficient (LEP) student is “a student whose first language is a language other than English and who is unable to perform ordinary classroom work in English.”

Formerly Limited English Proficient: A student who is formerly limited English proficient (FLEP) has transitioned out of LEP status during the current school year or within the past two school years. The federal government requires that states continue to monitor the progress of FLEP students. The combined LEP & FLEP reporting category in tables 4, 6, 7, and 9 represents an official AYP subgroup reporting category.

Low Income: A student identified as low income is eligible to receive free or reduced-price school lunches according to federal guidelines.

A. Class of 2007

Table 4 shows the cumulative percent of students in the class of 2007 who have passed the ELA test or retest, passed the Mathematics test or retest, and attained the CD. The percentages for passing ELA, passing Mathematics, and earning the CD were calculated by dividing the number of students who achieved each milestone by adjusted October 2006 SIMS enrollment figures.

Table 4
Competency Determination Results for the Class of 2007: All Students and Subgroups

	Adjusted Oct. 2006 Enrollment	ELA		Math		Competency Determination	
		# Passing ELA	% Passing ELA	# Passing Math	% Passing Math	# Earning CD	% Earning CD
All Students	69,195	66,971	97%	66,409	96%	66,077	95%
Student Status							
Non-Disabled	58,823	58,233	99%	57,949	99%	57,741	98%
Students with Disabilities	10,372	8,738	84%	8,460	82%	8,336	80%
Limited English Proficient	1,797	1,431	80%	1,476	82%	1,327	74%
LEP & FLEP	2,805	2,389	85%	2,425	86%	2,257	80%
Low Income	14,430	13,628	94%	13,363	93%	13,204	92%
Race/Ethnicity (New Code)							
African American/Black	5,552	5,147	93%	5,016	90%	4,916	89%
Asian	3,164	3,086	98%	3,078	97%	3,059	97%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	106	100	94%	98	92%	96	91%
Hispanic/Latino	7,068	6,567	93%	6,405	91%	6,277	89%
Multi-Race (non-Hispanic)	726	707	97%	694	96%	692	95%
Native American	165	158	96%	154	93%	152	92%
White	52,414	51,206	98%	50,964	97%	50,885	97%
Race/Ethnicity (Old Code)*							
African American/Black	5,916	5,495	93%	5,357	91%	5,251	89%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3,318	3,239	98%	3,231	97%	3,211	97%
Hispanic	6,595	6,114	93%	5,955	90%	5,835	88%
Native American	191	185	97%	179	94%	178	93%
White	53,147	51,915	98%	51,662	97%	51,579	97%
Gender							
Female	34,427	33,511	97%	33,188	96%	33,048	96%
Male	34,768	33,460	96%	33,221	96%	33,029	95%
Vocational Technical	15,881	15,661	99%	15,496	98%	15,427	97%
Urbanicity							
Urban**	16,842	15,727	93%	15,392	91%	15,164	90%
Non-Urban	52,353	51,244	98%	51,017	97%	50,913	97%

* Old race categories are derived from June 2005 SIMS. For students who moved to Massachusetts in summer 2005 or later, the Department mapped the new race code onto the original race code whenever possible.

** Urban districts reported here are: Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Chelsea, Chicopee, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Revere, Somerville, Springfield, Taunton, and Worcester.

As of March 2007, 95% of students in the class of 2007 had attained the CD by meeting the grade 10 standard in ELA and Mathematics, as shown in Figure 3. About 1% had met the grade 10 standard in ELA only, less than 0.5% had met the grade 10 standard in Mathematics only, and 3% had not met the standard in either subject.

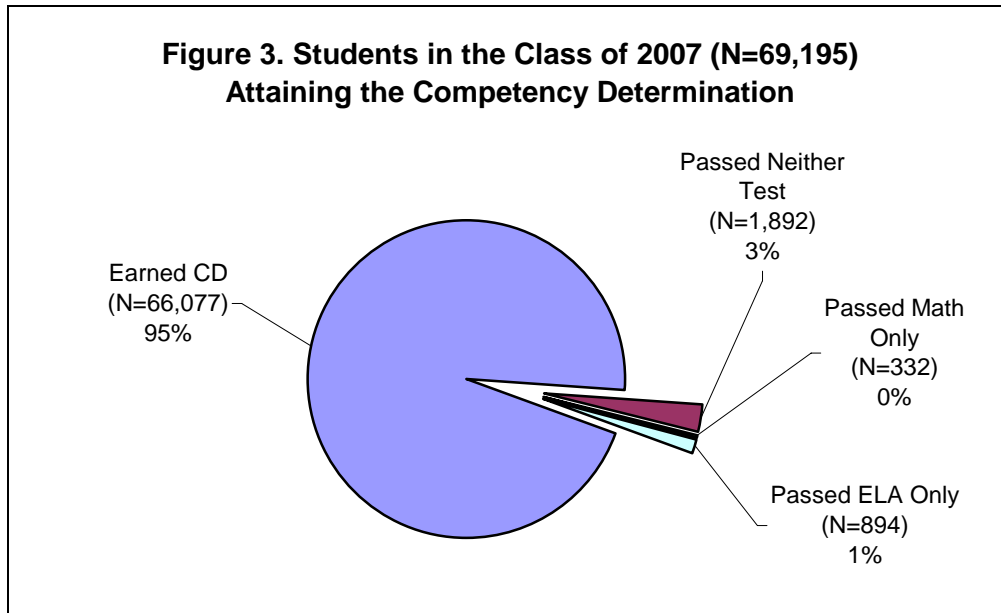


Figure 4 shows the average days absent for students in the class of 2007 by Competency Determination status.

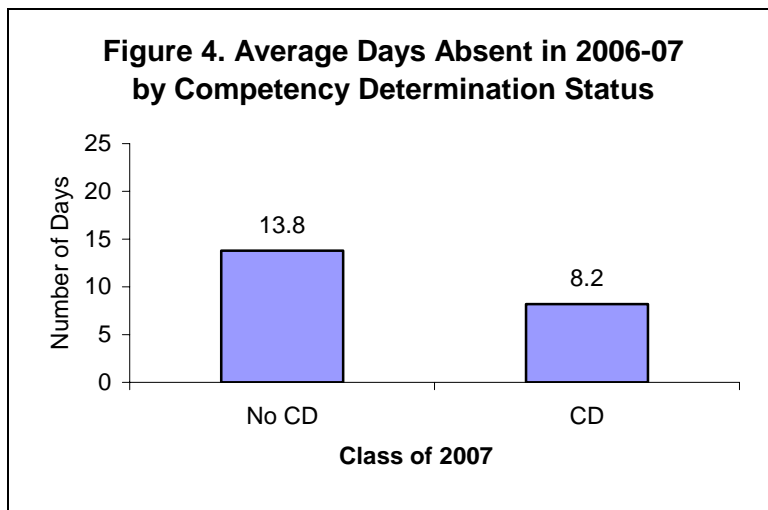


Figure 5 shows the percent of students in the class of 2007 by race/ethnicity who passed grade 10 tests in ELA and Mathematics on the first attempt. The figure also shows the cumulative percent of students who have attained the CD after retesting opportunities (up to four). Table 5 offers the same information in a chart format.

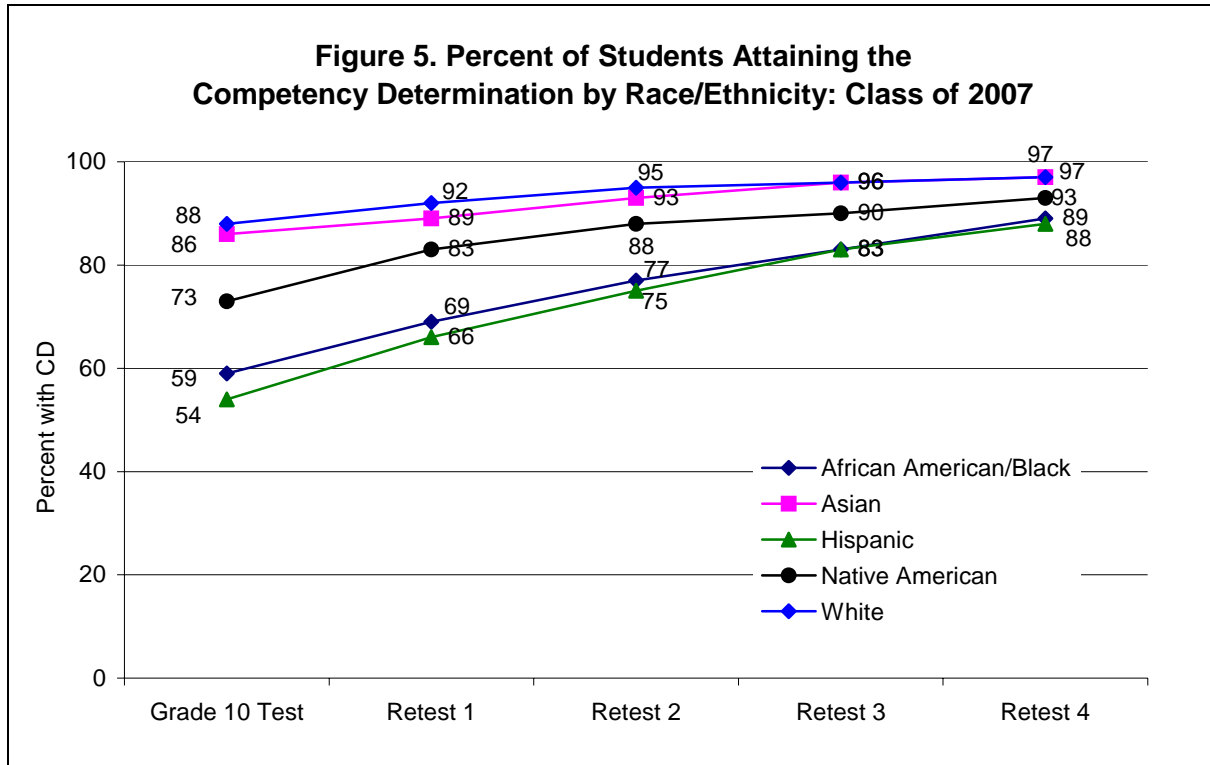


Table 5
Percent of Students Attaining the Competency Determination by Race/Ethnicity: Class of 2007

	Grade 10 Test May 2005	Retest 1 Nov. 2005	Retest 2 Mar. 2006	Retest 3 Nov. 2006	Retest 4 Mar. 2007
African American/Black	59	69	77	83	89
Asian	86	89	93	96	97
Hispanic	54	66	75	83	88
Native American	73	83	88	90	93
White	88	92	95	96	97

Figure 6 shows the percent of students in the class of 2007 by student status who passed the grade 10 tests in ELA and Mathematics on the first attempt. The figure also shows the cumulative percent of students who have attained the CD after retesting opportunities (up to four). Table 6 offers the same information in chart format.

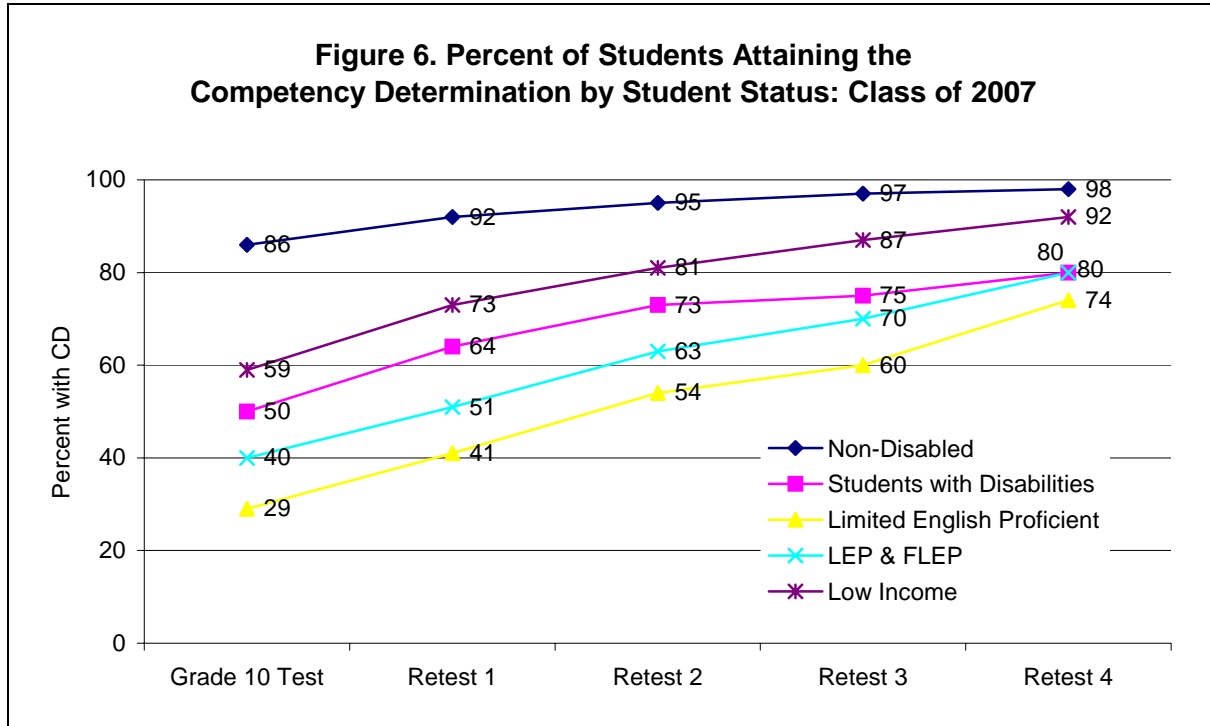


Table 6
Percent of Students Attaining the Competency Determination by Student Status: Class of 2007

	Grade 10 Test May 2005	Retest 1 Nov. 2005	Retest 2 Mar. 2006	Retest 3 Nov. 2006	Retest 4 Mar. 2007
Non-Disabled	86	92	95	97	98
Students with Disabilities	50	64	73	75	80
Limited English Proficient	29	41	54	60	74
LEP & FLEP	40	51	63	70	80
Low Income	59	73	81	87	92

B. Class of 2008

Table 7 shows the cumulative percent of students in the class of 2008 who have passed the ELA test or retest, Mathematics test or retest, and have attained the CD. The percentages for passing ELA, passing Mathematics, and earning the CD were calculated by dividing the number of students who attained each milestone by the adjusted October 2006 SIMS enrollment figures.

**Table 7
Competency Determination Results for the Class of 2008: All Students and Subgroups**

	Adjusted Oct. 2006 Enrollment	ELA		Math		Competency Determination	
		# Passing ELA	% Passing ELA	# Passing Math	% Passing Math	# Earning CD	% Earning CD
All Students	72,684	69,201	95%	67,513	93%	66,875	92%
Student Status							
Non-Disabled	61,230	59,727	98%	58,770	96%	58,373	95%
Students with Disabilities	11,454	9,474	83%	8,743	76%	8,502	74%
Limited English Proficient	2,288	1,505	66%	1,547	68%	1,293	57%
LEP & FLEP	3,270	2,396	73%	2,385	73%	2,110	65%
Low Income	16,693	15,044	90%	14,154	85%	13,786	83%
Race/Ethnicity (New Code)							
African-American/Black	6,119	5,476	89%	5,093	83%	4,957	81%
Asian	3,222	3,080	96%	3,072	95%	3,021	94%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	126	113	90%	111	88%	111	88%
Hispanic/Latino	8,072	6,993	87%	6,487	80%	6,249	77%
Multi-Race (non-Hispanic)	857	819	96%	798	93%	791	92%
Native American	194	184	95%	176	91%	176	91%
White	54,094	52,536	97%	51,776	96%	51,570	95%
Race/Ethnicity (Old Code) *							
African-American/Black	6,523	5,867	90%	5,458	84%	5,320	82%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3,444	3,291	96%	3,282	95%	3,233	94%
Hispanic	7,500	6,444	86%	5,966	80%	5,732	76%
Native American	216	205	95%	200	93%	198	92%
White	54,949	53,357	97%	52,568	96%	52,356	95%
Gender							
Female	35,736	34,328	96%	33,402	93%	33,176	93%
Male	36,948	34,873	94%	34,111	92%	33,699	91%
Vocational Technical	16,014	15,432	96%	14,899	93%	14,748	92%
Urbanicity							
Urban**	18,016	16,042	89%	15,027	83%	14,641	81%
Non-Urban	54,668	53,159	97%	52,486	96%	52,234	96%

* Old race categories are derived from June 2005 SIMS. For students who moved to Massachusetts in summer 2005 or later, the Department mapped the new race code onto the original race code whenever possible.

** Urban districts reported here are: Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Chelsea, Chicopee, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Revere, Somerville, Springfield, Taunton, and Worcester.

Figure 7 shows that as of March 2007, 92% of the students in the class of 2008 had met the grade 10 standard in both ELA and Mathematics, 3% had met the grade 10 standard in ELA only, 1%

had met the grade 10 standard in Mathematics only, and 4% had not met the passing standard in either subject.

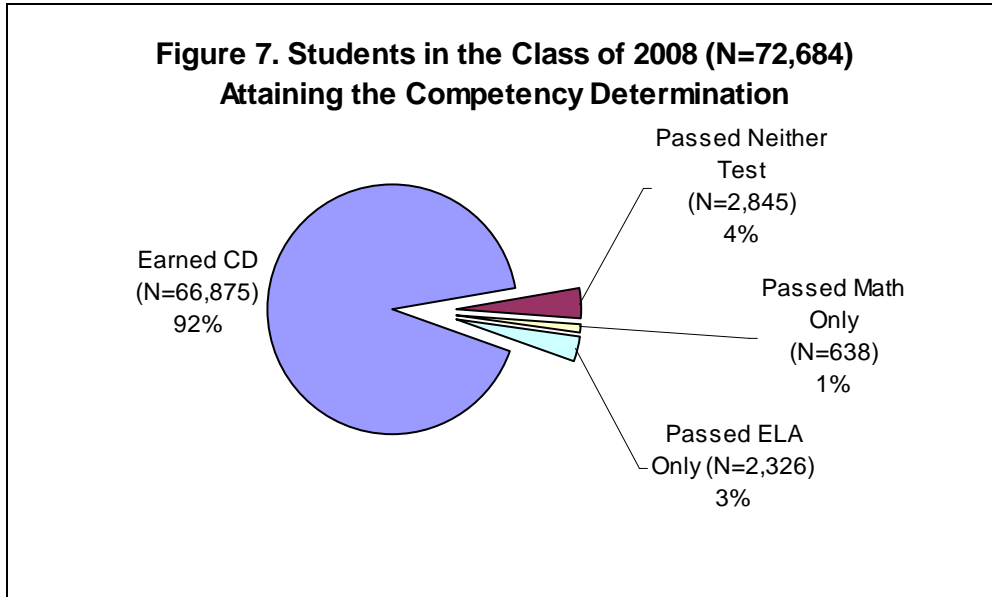


Figure 8 shows the average days absent for students in the class of 2008 by Competency Determination status.

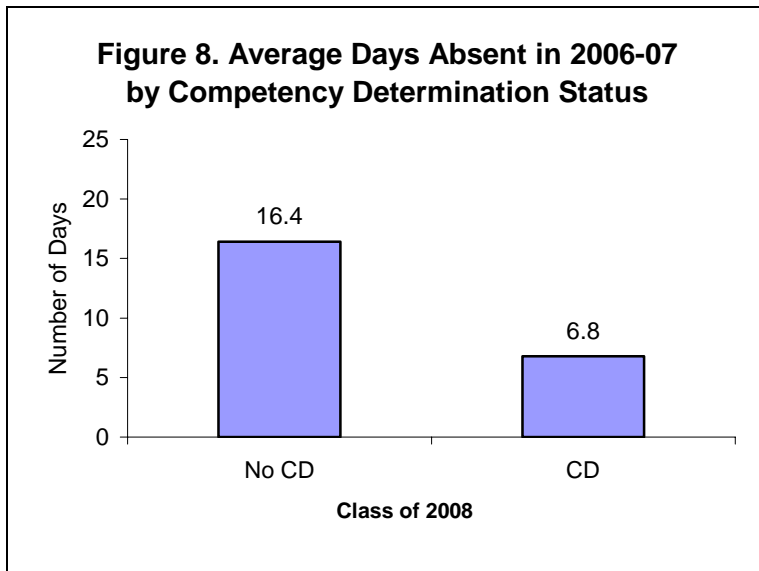


Figure 9 shows the percent of students in the class of 2008 by race/ethnicity who passed grade 10 tests in ELA and Mathematics on the first attempt. The figure also shows the cumulative percent of students who obtained the CD through two retesting opportunities. Table 8 offers the same information in chart format.

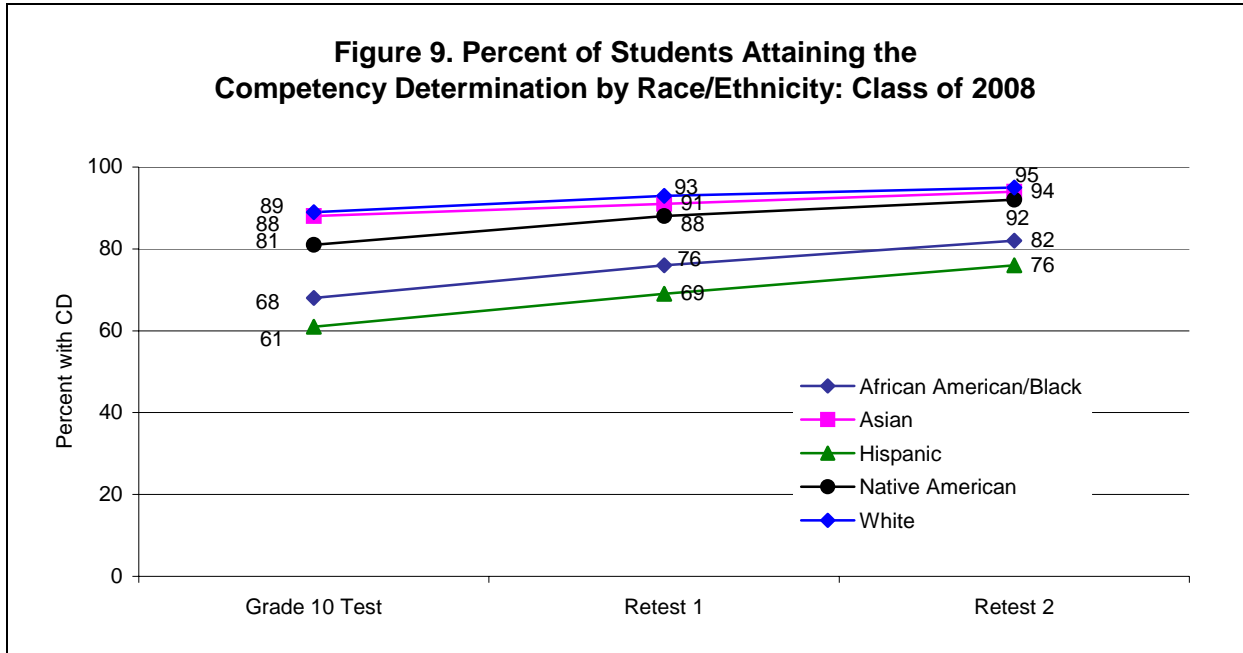


Table 8
Percent of Students Attaining the Competency Determination by Race/Ethnicity: Class of 2008

	Grade 10 Test May 2006	Retest 1 Nov. 2006	Retest 2 Mar. 2007
African American/Black	68	76	82
Asian	88	91	94
Hispanic	61	69	76
Native American	81	88	92
White	89	93	95

Figure 10 shows the percent of students in the class of 2008 by student status who passed the grade 10 tests in ELA and Mathematics on their first attempt and the cumulative percent of students who obtained the CD through two additional retesting opportunities. Table 9 offers the same information in a chart format.

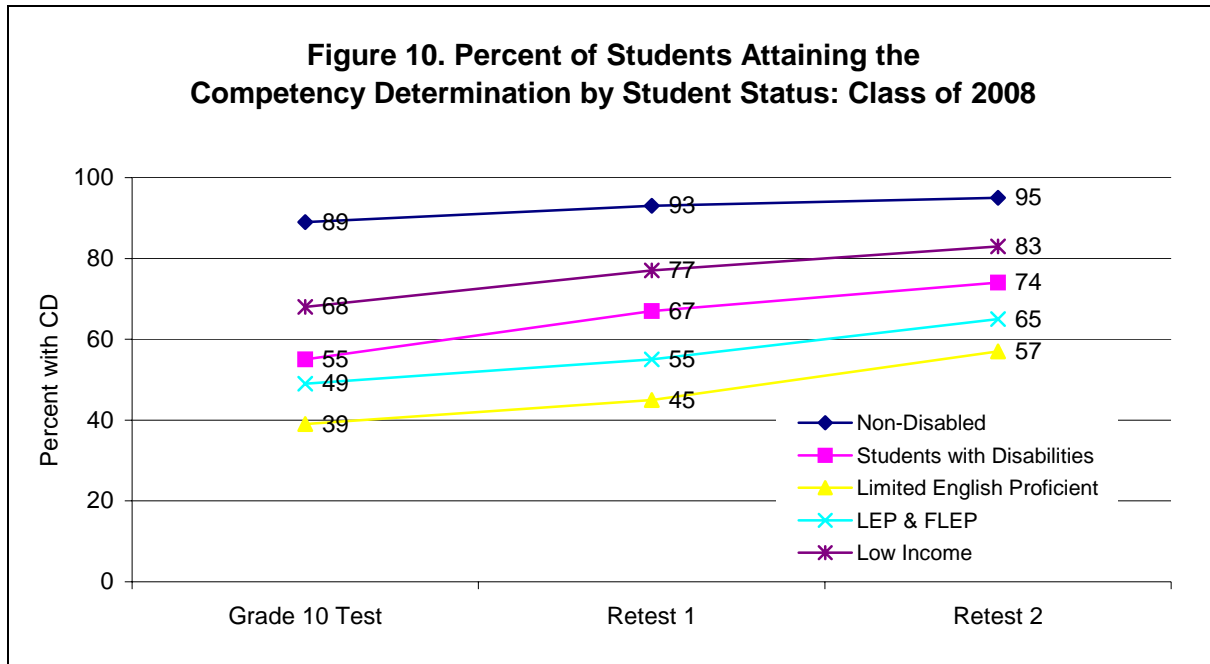


Table 9
Percent of Students Attaining the Competency Determination by Student Status: Class of 2008

	Grade 10 Test May 2006	Retest 1 Nov. 2006	Retest 2 Mar. 2007
Non-Disabled	89	93	95
Students with Disabilities	55	67	74
Limited English Proficient	39	45	57
LEP & FLEP	49	55	65
Low Income	68	77	83

III. School and District Results

The cumulative Competency Determination attainment rates by school and district for the classes of 2007 (current seniors) and 2008 (current juniors) can be found in Excel documents located at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.html.